

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Dinner in San Francisco, California

November 16, 2023

Welcome. I'd like to make a brief toast to welcome you all. And I want to say that it's been a pleasure so far. We'll make sure tomorrow is even better. All right?

We had a great day and great meetings today. And the—we broke some important ground for APEC. And—but tonight it's about breaking bread together, and we know one another a little better after tonight.

And I'll—I assume you'll forgive me for quoting an Irish poet instead of a Pacific poet. [*Laughter*] But I beg your pardon for doing that. But they're—Eavan Boland wrote a—she was a daughter of Dublin, Ireland, and she made a career as a poet in Palo Alto, California. And she taught at Stanford University.

And this was one of her last poems. And a line in the poem goes: "Remind us again now that history changes . . . That it belongs to us. It belongs to all of us."

We gather this week in San Francisco at an inflection point in history. One of the full new challenges that's—not only challenges, but new threats as well.

But we have to never forget that we can change and bend the arc of history for the better if we make up our mind to do it, that together we can harness the power of the Pacific to grow our economies, to uplift our workers, to protect our planet, and to connect our people to one another and the future of greater prosperity and dignity for all.

So much of history of the world was—will be written in the Asia-Pacific in the coming years. We must never forget that it's a history that belongs to all of us: hopes that have always brought us forward; hopes that, in fact, we share—3 billion people that we represent share in common; hopes and aspirations that have brought us together here today.

So please join me in raising your glass to our people, to our—to the Pacific, and to the possibilities of all we can do together.

Hear, hear. Welcome.

[At this point, the President offered a toast.]

Bon appétit.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:21 p.m. at the Legion of Honor museum. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 17.

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